

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEARCE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

SAFER VEHICLES FOR SOLDIERS:
A TALE OF DELAYS AND
GLITCHES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I am going to read a bit, which I do not usually do on the floor, from yesterday's New York Times front page, because I think it is so extraordinary and it goes so much to the incompetence and the indifference of Donald Rumsfeld and others in this administration regarding what is going on in Iraq and the lack of protection for our troops.

"When Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld visited Iraq last year to tour the Abu Ghraib Prison camp, military officials did not rely on a government-issued Humvee to transport him safely on the ground," not even an armored Humvee, that is my own little addition. "Instead, they turned to Halliburton, the oil services contractor, which lent the Pentagon a rolling fortress of steel called the Rhino Runner."

Now, no wonder Secretary Rumsfeld goes to Iraq and says everything is going great. He is rolling around in an armored fortress of steel provided by his former employer. Well, I am sorry, the former employer of Vice President CHENEY, Halliburton, riding around in something called a Rhino Runner, which is supposed to be able to withstand a thousand-pound bomb.

Now, our troops are out there, some of them in unarmored Humvees that cannot resist any bomb, bullets, or shrapnel; some of them are in armored Humvees which can resist between 4- and 8-pound bombs, but then there are other options out there.

Back to the New York Times: "State Department officials traveling in Iraq use armored vehicles that are built with V-shaped hulls to better deflect bullets and bombs. Members of Congress favor another model called the M1117, which can endure 12-pound explosives and 50-caliber, armor-piercing rounds.

"Unlike the Humvee, the Pentagon's vehicle of choice for American troops, the others were designed from scratch to withstand attacks in battlefields like Iraq with no safe zones. Last fall, for instance, a Rhino traveling the treacherous airport road in Baghdad endured a bomb that left a 6-foot-wide crater. The passengers walked away unscathed. 'I have no doubt should I have been in any other vehicle,' wrote an Army captain, 'the lone military passenger, 'the results would have been catastrophically different.'

"Yet more than 2 years into the war, efforts by United States military units to obtain large numbers of these stronger vehicles for soldiers have faltered, even as the Pentagon's program to armor Humvees continues to be plagued by delays, an examination by The New York Times has found."

And then, the end of last week, we had the revelation about the extraordinary shortages for the Marines.

Mr. Speaker, I guess I should not be surprised when we have a Secretary of Defense who predicted that our troops would be greeted with flowers and candies and sweets; and that the occupation would last, that we would be down to 30,000 troops within 2 months and would not be there longer than 5; that he has been two, four, six, or a hundred steps all the way along the way. But to still deny the reality, because he is riding around in an armored Rhino provided by Halliburton, of our troops, the bitter reality of them in unarmored Humvees, as many Marines still are, and we still hear from time to time of Army units that are out there in unarmored Humvees, although they claim they never go off base anymore; and then to hear that State Department people and Members of Congress get superior vehicles that are not available to the regular troops, this is extraordinary.

More than 2 years into this war, and now this insurgency, and the Pentagon is focused on Star Wars and other fantasies; and the troops still lack basics, things for which we need no technological development. The technology exists, the manufacturers exist, but the will to purchase those vehicles to protect our troops does not exist in Secretary Rumsfeld's higher echelons of the organization.

But, again, he is riding around, he cannot even hear or see the explosions in the Rhino Runner. They probably have the music turned up loud and the AC is blasting away, and he does not have the slightest idea where he is. But the troops sure know where they are; they sure do.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for this embarrassment to end. He should have gone long ago, he should go now, and it is time to start providing the troops the basics they need to come home safe.

THE HIGH COST OF PRESCRIPTION
DRUGS IN THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, once again I rise to talk tonight about the unfairness of what Americans pay for prescription drugs compared to what consumers pay around the rest of the industrialized world.

I have with me again this chart. Let me just read some of the numbers, the difference between the prices for these drugs at the Metropolitan Pharmacy in

Frankfurt, Germany and at one of my pharmacies in Rochester, Minnesota: Nexium, for \$60.25 in Germany; \$145.33 in the United States.

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Norvasc, \$19.31 in Germany, \$54.83 in the United States. Zyrtec, \$34.33 in Germany, \$73.02. Prevacid, \$35.22, \$146.47. Zocor, \$23.83 in Germany, \$85.39 here. The list goes on. These are 10 of the most commonly prescribed name-brand drugs. The total in Germany, \$455.57. The total here in the United States, more than double that, at \$1,040.40. Americans pay 128 percent more for exactly the same drugs made in the same plants under the same FDA approval.

But many Members ask me, well, how did you become so involved in this issue? What made you so passionate? I would like to share that story of how I got involved in this issue. A number of years ago I had a town hall meeting and there were some seniors who came to the meetings and they told me about going up to Canada to buy their prescription drugs. And to be honest, it was one of those events where I heard but I did not really listen. And then at a subsequent meeting one of the seniors asked me a very tough question. She said, why are we treated like common criminals for going to Canada to save some dollars on our prescription drugs? Well, I did not have a very good answer.

And then a few months later something happened that had nothing to do with prescription drugs. The price of live hogs in the United States collapsed. The price of pigs dropped from about \$37 per hundred weight down to about \$7. It was one of the worst catastrophes for American pork producers since the Great Depression. And they did what many constituents do. They called their Congressman and said, can you not do something about this? And I said, well, I do not know what I can do. And they said, well, can you not somehow at least stop all these Canadian pigs from coming into our market, making our supply-demand situation even worse? Is not there something you can do about that, Congressman?

So I called the Secretary of Agriculture, I called the Secretary of Commerce, and I got essentially the same answer. They both said, well, that is called NAFTA. That is called free trade. We have open markets. And finally, to the Secretary of Commerce I said, wait a second; you mean we have open borders when it comes to pork bellies but not when it comes to Prilosec? And he sort of laughed on the other end of the phone and said, well, I guess that is right. And I said, well, that does not sound right to me.

And so this little pilgrimage started there with the price of pigs. And there is something wrong with a system that protects the large pharmaceutical companies, but does nothing to protect our pork producers. And so I began to do research and realized how much more Americans pay.